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ABSTRACT

A project using on-campus electronic mail (e-mail) to teach communicative writing in English as a Second Language to Japanese junior college students is described. The project had three stages: (1) planning; (2) piloting with a small group of students; and (3) implementation in three large classes (n=55, 28, 36). The aim was to help students write more communicatively and with less anxiety. Planning involved gaining student access to the campus e-mail system, first on a small scale and later with access to more computer services. The pilot involved nine second-year students in a graduation project. Students needed to be familiarized with two-way message exchanges. However, after exchanges began, student-teacher interactions became more interesting. Learning word processing and spell-checking in English and document transfer were initially a challenge. Implementation with three larger classes, in which most students were familiar with e-mail, began with a paired self-introduction writing activity. Partners questioned each other, commented on introductions, and made grammatical corrections, helping each other refine the final product. Teacher feedback was provided weekly. It was found that the method facilitated timely and comfortable communication. The experiments provided insights into advantages, difficulties, and effective procedures for computer-based communication. (MSE)

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ED 403 745

On-Campus E-Mail for Communicative Writing

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December 23, 1996

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On-Campus E-Mail for Communicative Writing

Mariko Miyao

Abstract

This paper documents some pilot projects using on-campus e-mail to teach communicative English writing to Japanese junior college students. The purpose of this case study is to find how on-campus e-mail can be effectively implemented in order to motivate students to write more communicatively in English.

The projects have been carried out in three stages; (1) a preparation period, (2) a pilot project with a small group of students, and (3) writing activities in two courses in larger classrooms with two formats, one with e-mail format, and another with the combination of paper and e-mail formats.

This study will report what kind of activities can be provided and which media can be utilized in order to teach communicative writing effectively to various groups of students. The paper will also discuss the benefits of using e-mail for the language teacher, such as obtaining necessary data on student writing, and giving instructive feedback to the students more promptly.

Key Words: e-mail, communicative writing

1. Introduction

1.1. Main Purpose of the Project

One of the basic aims for language teaching is to help students speak or write more communicatively with less anxiety. For this purpose, on-campus e-mail can be utilized so as to allow students to communicate with their teachers and classmates more freely than otherwise. In addition, before venturing into e-mailing with the outside world, students can learn basic skills in computer operation, composition and communication in class.

Teachers themselves benefit from such exercises by obtaining necessary data promptly on student writing. This innovative medium helps

teachers to understand their students better and give timely and effective feedback in the classroom or via e-mail.

In this paper I will present a case study to document and discuss the results of a pilot project with a small group of students in the initial stage and with larger groups in a later stage along with students' comments on the use of e-mail. The ultimate purpose of the study is to find how e-mail can be effectively implemented for a large-sized low level class of Japanese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) junior college students.

1.2. Background for the Use of E-mail in Writing Activities

Through my experience of teaching English word processing courses, I have become especially interested in combining computers and writing activities. First of all, as teachers of English in Japan are well aware of, many students are reluctant to be in the center spot and to speak out in class (Helgesen, 1991, p.8; Sullivan, 1993, p. 34; Braine, 1994, p. 23). This fact makes teaching communicative English rather difficult. In order to overcome this problem, it is very useful to teach basic writing by using computers for the purpose of motivating students, especially those majoring in computer science at the junior college level. It may be argued that computers are less threatening and nonconfrontational (Sullivan, 1993; pp. 34-35) and bring the outside world into the classroom, making "language learning a more authentic meaningful process" (Brinton, 1991, p. 469). In such a writing classroom, students can take time, revise as often as they like and consult with their teachers and classmates without much anxiety.

However, the teacher still encounters an age-long dilemma when reading and returning student writing submitted in paper format, which Warschauer (1995, p. 33) aptly describes as "the disruptive nature of the collection cycle." Meeting only once a week often disrupts the natural flow of lively exchanges, and communication tends to break down before the next class meeting.

On the other hand, by using e-mail, the teacher can observe student writing more closely as soon as e-mail messages reach his or her electronic mail box all through the week. When the need arises, the teacher can e-mail comments back to the originator of the message or to the whole class without waiting to talk to them until the next class meeting. Students can enjoy this type of rapid communication with their peers and teachers which enhances them greatly to learn to interact with others more positively.

Therefore, it will be worthwhile to see if the problems of "the disruptive collection cycle" can actually be solved by using e-mail for students in writing activities

2. Preparation Period

In December 1994, I contemplated a project to use e-mail for teaching English at a junior college, where I had been teaching for about five years. Immediately I began preparing for the project to start in the coming semester.

2.1. Outline of the Original Plan

Initially my students had no access to the e-mail system on campus. My original plan therefore was to use a sample shareware already installed in some computers in the computer science department (*Joho Shori-Ka*) at the junior college.

The available system at that time was designed mainly for a small number of users, with no capability of connecting them to other e-mail systems. For the time being, it seemed sufficient for my project purposes, because I intended to use it for a small group of about 10 students taking a graduation project course (*sotsugyou kenkyuu*) under my supervision in the coming spring semester. At that point, using e-mail in teaching writing to a large class of students was not in my plan yet.

There was a notable development during the spring recess when I was familiarizing myself with the shareware and planning for various

alternative writing activities; in mid-April, the department decided to install a computer network system to allow all students in the department to access the Internet, including e-mail and World Wide Web. The system became effective in mid-May.

Now that students can access the Internet, wider variety of activities have become available to them, such as pen pal exchanges, and other international and cross-cultural interactions. My main purpose, however, is to find and analyze effective ways to encourage students to write more communicatively with the help of e-mail, which is useful, also from the teacher's standpoint, in observing what students are actually doing and what kind of problems they are facing in learning to write in English.

For this reason, I decided to stick to the use of e-mail within the campus at least for the time being, although the newly installed system can help me expand my scope in redesigning alternative projects in the future.

2.2. Some Observations

Through my experience in preparing for a project involving new innovative ideas and technical skills, I have found it very important for the language teacher to establish good communication channels with technical staff in charge of the computer system on campus.

One other important consideration is to take full account of prospective students' technical ability in advance for preparing computer-oriented courses in language learning, since very few students are well-trained and well-motivated for such courses.

3. Pilot Project with a Small Group of Students

In the spring semester from mid-May to July 1995, three kinds of writing activities using e-mail were provided as a pilot project to a small group of (nine) second-year students in a graduation project course (*sotsugyou kenkyuu*).

3.1. Initial Round of E-mail Exchange

First, each student sent a message in English to the teacher and the teacher responded with comments and questions. None of them took time to answer the teacher's questions because they thought that they had submitted their assignments, and therefore, completed their task. For them, exchanging messages by e-mail with the teacher was a quite new experience, and therefore it became necessary to explain that, unlike other types of report writing, they should communicate back and forth via e-mail as required.

3.2. Improved Interactions

After the explanation, two or more rounds of message exchanges were made in English between the teacher and the students.

This writing activity provided an opportunity for students to think, read what they have written, and revise the content or add more information. The content of their writing became much livelier and more interesting to read because they realized that they had an audience even though it was only their teacher.

3.3. Conversion to E-Mail Message Files

To make the students more aware of correct spelling, I taught them how to use an English word processing software called WordStar. The second-year students were skillful in word processing in Japanese, but had not learned to use an English word processor.

The students enjoyed using the spelling checker very much but to move the content of a document file from the WordStar into an outgoing e-mail message file was not simple. First a document file must be converted into a non-document file before moving it into an e-mail file. This activity of learning different techniques of computer operations may be relevant to

their major. However, it took some time for them to understand the underlying concept of the procedure. Also with the WordStar, students must learn various commands before mastering to use it. This left little time for me to teach the content of the writing activity itself.

With the current word processing software (MS-Word Japanese version) installed in the new computer system in April 1996, students can copy and paste a word processed document into an e-mail file very easily without even bothering to convert the file. I sometimes wonder why I went over so much trouble to teach such a complicated procedure. My intention at the time was just to make my students realize the correct spelling. Now it is so easy to do the same activity. This may be a perfect example of what a big difference one year can make in coping with this fast moving computer age and technology.

3.4. Students' Comments

The students in the graduation project course evaluated their activities at the conclusion of the pilot project. Their comments helped me to predict what students might go through and what problems should be expected to occur in a larger classroom.

Students' comments

E-mail is:	*About writing activities:*
Efficient to submit assignments.	Enjoyed typing because it was a new experience.
Efficient to send messages to teachers/friends.	Hectic to write in English and via e-mail but, enjoyed it toward the end.
Convenient. (We can read/write messages at our convenience.)	
A little difficult to master because of so many different, confusing functions.	

3.5. Some Findings

The students enjoyed this new media more than expected because they could communicate with their teacher more conveniently than in traditional paper format.

Some of them, however, felt that using e-mail was rather technically difficult. Around that time, a pair of first-year students exchanged rather silly messages and by mistake sent them to all the teachers who had e-mail

addresses. The e-mail software used by students did not show clearly to whom the mail was going while typing a message in the text area, and these two students did not know that they somehow included all teachers' e-mail addresses in the cc: line. This incidence triggered the feeling of anxiety in some students. Therefore, teachers must be careful not to let technical matters hinder the process of writing activities using not only e-mail but also other computer technology.

Especially, in the first year when a new technology is introduced, both teachers and students must cope with various unexpected technical problems in addition to actual writing activities. It makes the whole project rather difficult to handle if we hasten to acquire good results from the beginning. For this reason, I was very fortunate to be able to try these activities first with a small group of students, who were not too afraid to challenge new activities using computers.

4. Writing Activities in Larger Classrooms

Generally, the larger the class-size becomes, the greater the effort for preparation should be required. This is especially true with language courses using computers. Without careful planning and detailed preparations, using e-mail might well become a source of confusion rather than effective feedback in larger class situations.

In view of these potential problems, therefore, two major changes were made on my project: (1) to give collective feedback during the class hour and not individually, and (2) to make writing activities in pairs, not between the teacher and a student. This way, the teacher can set aside some time to observe electronically how students interact with their partners.

In the beginning of the 1995 fall semester, writing activities were provided in two courses: 'English for Computer Science I' for one class of 55 first-year students, and 'English Word Processing' for two classes of 28 and

36 second-year students each. The majority of the students in both courses briefly learned to use e-mail in other computer related courses in the spring semester.

In both courses, the students were assigned to write self-introductions as a pair work.

4.1. 'English for Computer Science I' for First-Year Students

This course was offered in a regular classroom and, therefore, this writing activity was provided mainly as out-of-the-class assignments.

4.1.1. Procedure for Self-Introduction

The following is the summary of instructions to the students.

1. On the first day, have students form pairs and introduce each other verbally. Provide examples of introductions in writing.
2. Ask each student to write a self-introduction and e-mail it to her partner as homework. Have them always include the teacher's address on the CC: line.
3. The receiver writes comments and at least three questions about the content via e-mail.
4. The sender answers peer comments/questions by e-mail.
5. Ask the receiver to suggest further improvement or correct some grammatical errors for the sender.
6. After several exchanges, have each student rewrite and send the final version of the introduction to her partner. (See Appendix A for an example of message exchanges between a pair.)

4.1.2. Some Findings

The students responded to each other frequently because they could send their messages at their convenience and many of them even apologized to their partners when they took some time to respond. With

this particular activity, most students sent four to five messages each by the final version of self-introduction. Quantity wise, thanks to rapid exchanges through e-mail, their final versions were much longer than their first ones.

By performing as writers, readers, and feedback givers, I believe that they actually learned "to sharpen their critical skills in analyzing written works as well as to increase their ability to analyze their own drafts critically" (Kroll, 1991, p. 258). As Raimes (1983) points out, the students did their best to convey their messages because they were writing for real readers (p. 9), all through e-mail.

Feedback was given to the whole class each week, because I had the information ready by reading their messages as they came into my e-mail box almost every day. The collective feedback was not only time-saving but also very useful and timely because the students were still in the process of revising.

In paper format, it is sometimes difficult to give timely and effective feedback and to receive prompt responses because by the time the teacher notices a certain problem, his or her students might have advanced to some other activity. In e-mail format, on the other hand, the teacher can monitor the current status of each student's writing promptly and have time to plan for the next step.

4.1.3. Students' Comments in Larger Classes

After this writing activity, the first-year students wrote comments for five questions (see Appendix B for their comments translated from Japanese and summarized).

By reading their comments, teachers can learn many things. For example, under Question 1 (Q.1), their answers suggest that they use their communicative strategies such as avoiding to talk about certain subjects when they encounter some difficulties to express their thought precisely or sufficiently. We can also understand that they are aware of the importance

of readers and they learn to think more clearly about themselves (Q.2). They learn techniques to use computers, and learn to organize their time schedules (Q.3). They realize the convenience of using computer technology including e-mail (Q.4). Overall, this activity gave them a good awareness training of the importance of mastering practical knowledge of English to communicate with people throughout the world (Q.5).

4.2. 'English Word Processing' for Second-Year Students

This writing activity was introduced as part of teaching English word processing techniques to the second-year students. My interest was to find if there would be any differences between the first-year and second-year students in their learning behaviors, and also how different the result would be if word processing and e-mailing activities were combined.

4.2.1. Procedure for Self-Introduction

1. On the first day, teach how to use the English word processor. Ask students to write about themselves directly into the computer. Provide self-introduction examples.
2. As homework, have them complete their self-introductions.
3. In the second class hour, have them form pairs to check each other's writing and make comments verbally. Have them revise the self-introductions if necessary during the class. As homework, assign each reader to write comments and at least three questions about the content and return the paper back to the writer. The writer then rewrites the self-introduction by the next class.
4. In the third class hour, teach them how to use a spelling checker. Teach also how to convert the document file into a non-document one and transfer it to an e-mail message file.
5. As homework, have students e-mail the final versions to their partners with CC to the teacher.

4.2.2. Some Findings

The above mentioned writing activity was the combination of paper and e-mail formats. I could not observe in detail how the students were interacting with their partners in the process of writing and revising until I received their final introductions through e-mail. It was rather frustrating for the teacher not knowing how they were working on their assignments.

In the case of the first-year students, I was able to collect data on student writing on each step through e-mail which gave me a clear picture of how to handle the whole class. Fortunately, I was able to predict what problems the second-year students might face, by applying the information acquired from the first-year students' activities which started one or two weeks earlier.

Also, I had to spend a great deal of time to teach word processing and other computer related techniques in the English word processing course, and could not concentrate only on the content. If the teacher's main purpose is to observe and help students in writing, it would be better to simplify the procedure for technical matters as much as possible.

On the average, the second-year students wrote more than the first-year students because they were more accustomed to submitting written assignments (although in Japanese) and did not hesitate to write longer messages.

However, although they still must learn to be more productive in writing, the first-year students seemed to have enjoyed the process of exchanging messages between themselves much more than the second-year students. As a teacher I enjoyed observing their writing activities from the beginning to the end because the activity was concentrated more on the content and I could observe each step through e-mail.

5. Concluding Remarks

Teachers and researchers emphasize the importance of collaborative and student-centered classrooms using computers for writing activities (Jones & Fortescue, 1987, p. 54; Reid, 1993, p. 43; Sullivan, 1993, p. 34). In this sense, e-mail provides students an excellent opportunity for real, natural communication and empowers them for independent learning (Warschauer, 1995, p. 2). My students find writing in English extremely difficult. However, by interacting with each other and the teacher in this project, they seem to be starting to learn both interaction skills and composing skills in English without inhibitions.

The activities offered in the several months in 1995 have become the beginning of active learning for my students and active teaching for myself as a teacher. Luckily for me, based on this first experience of using on-campus e-mail in teaching English, more advanced and aggressive projects, such as participating in e-mail student discussion lists, and writing WWW home pages and computerized children's books, are currently under way (as of the fall of 1996) with another group of graduation project course students.

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Appendix A (A-1)

An Example of Message Exchanges Between a Pair

恵美, 3:04 PM 95.9.28 +0900 ゆみえちゃんへ 1

Date: Thu, 28 Sep 1995 15:04:31 +0900
From: 恵美 <9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp>
To: 9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp
Cc: mariko
Subject: ゆみえちゃんへ
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-2022-jp
X-Mailer: AL-Mail 0.94Beta

First Draft ①
From: Megumi
To: Yumie

Hello.
My name is Megumi [redacted]. I am nineteen years old.
I was born in Nagano, on August 2th.
My town name is Tobu.
My town is between Ueda City and Komoro City.
It takes me thirty minutes to go to Karuizawa from my house by car.

I live in Tsukuba City now. I live in an apartment.
It takes me seven hours to go to Tsukuba City from Nagano by car.
It very very very tired to it.
Of course, I'm "Home Alone".
I set the table regularly everyday, but I'm tired of it.
It takes me eight mimutes to go to our junior college from my apartment by a bicycle.
Now I study "System adoministrater" very hard.
When an examination in "SAD" is finish, I will go to a driving school.

Come and see me any time, please.
So much for this letter.
See you again.

15 SENTENCES + Hello & Closing

恵美, 4:01 PM 95.9.29 +0900 ゆみえちゃんへ 1 ②

Date: Fri, 29 Sep 1995 16:01:32 +0900
From: 恵美 <9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp>
To: 9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp
Cc: mariko
Subject: ゆみえちゃんへ
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-2022-jp
X-Mailer: AL-Mail 0.94Beta

From: Megumi
To: Yumie

木村 弓恵 <9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp> さんより：
> My name is Yumie [redacted].
> I am nineteen years old.
> I was born in Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture, on May 19th.

What is your hobby ?

> I live in Tsukuba city.

Do you have a pet?

> I am majoring in information processing.
> My famiiy is three children.
> Two giris and a boy.
> My sister is 18 years old.
> My brother is 28 years oid.

What is your brother job ?

> My family is very happy.
>

Feedback w/ 3 Quetions

弓恵, 4:23 PM 95.10.6 +0900 Re: 自己紹介会 1 ③

Date: Fri, 06 Oct 1995 16:23:33 +0900
From: 弓恵 <9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp>
To: 9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp
Cc: mariko
Subject: Re: 自己紹介会
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-2022-jp
X-Mailer: AL-Mail 0.94Beta

First Draft
From: Yumie
To: Megumi

弓恵 <9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp> さんより：
> My name is Yumie [redacted].
> I am nineteen years old.
> I was born in Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture, on May 19th.
> I live in Tsukuba city.
> I am majoring in information processing.
> My famiiy is three children.
> Two giris and a boy.
> My sister is 18 years old.
> My brother is 28 years oid.
> My family is very happy.
>

10 SENTENCES

弓恵, 4:56 PM 95.10.6 +0900 めぐみちゃんへ 1 ④

e: Fri, 06 Oct 1995 16:56:37 +0900
m: 弓恵 <9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp>
9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp
mariko
ject: めぐみちゃんへ
ntent-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-2022-jp
ailer: AL-Mail 0.94Beta

From: Yumie
To: Megumi

llo,Miss Megumi.
Thank you for your letter.
I like Nagano.Nagano is very very beatiful.
I hobby is sing songs.
I have a dog.Name is Adonis.I call him "ado".
You like dog?

My brother's job is bank man.He is very very herd,everyday.
He hav baby.Baby is very pretty.

Good-bye megumi.
See you agein.

w/COMMENTS one question Answers to Megumi's Questions

恵美, 2:27 PM 95.10.7 +0900 ゆみえちゃんへ 1 ⑤

Date: Sat, 07 Oct 1995 14:27:03 +0900
From: 恵美 <9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp>
To: 9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp
Cc: mariko
Subject: ゆみえちゃんへ
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-2022-jp
X-Mailer: AL-Mail 0.94Beta

From: Megumi
To: Yumie

Hello.
Thank you for your letter.
I have a dog and three cats in my house of Nagano.
My dog name is Kanta. We call him "Kan".
My cat name is "Mi","Tora"and "Siro".
I like dog very much.
But I don't like cat.
My brother and my mother like cat very much.
My father likes dog .My father takes dog for a field every day.
My cats is a grandmother, a mother and a child.
That is to say, my cats is a family.

I think your way is wrong.
I speak about it this time.

Question
1. Do you have a doriver's license.

2. How long does it take to go to a junior college ?

3. How do you spend this summer vacation?

At last, see you again.

w/COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

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Appendix A (A-2)
An Example of Message Exchanges Between a Pair

[redacted] 恵美, 9:30 AM 95.10.13 ,ゆみえちゃんへ

Date: Fri, 13 Oct 1995 09:30:13 +0900
From: [redacted] 恵美 <9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp>
To: 9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp
Cc: mariko
Subject: ゆみえちゃんへ
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-2022-jp
X-Mailer: AL-Mail 0.94Beta

Megumi's Revised Introduction ⑥

27 sentences + Hello and 2 closing sentences

original = 15

Hello.
My name is Megumi [redacted]. I am nineteen years old.
I was born in Nagano, on August 2th.
My town name is Tobu.
My town is between Ueda City and Komoro City.
It takes me thirty minutes to go to Karuizawa from my house by car.
I have a dog and three cats in my house.
My dog name is "Kanta". We call him "Kan".
My cat name is "Mi","Tora" and "Siro".
I like dog very much. But I don't like cat.
My brother and my mother like cat very much.
My father likes dog. He takes dog for a field every day.
My cats is a grandmother, a mother and a child.
That is to say, my cats is a family.

I live in Tsukuba City now. I live in an apartment.
It takes me seven hours to go to Tsukuba City from Nagano by car.
It very very very tired to it.
Of course, I'm "Home Alone".
I set the table regularly everyday, but I'm tired of it.
It takes me ten mimutes to go to our junior college from my apartment by a
bicycle.
Now I am studying "System adoministrater" very hard.
The examination is held on October 15th.
But I think I will not pass the examination.
When it is finisy, I will go to a driving school.

So much for this letter.
See you again. Good-bye.

[redacted] 弓恵, 5:54 PM 95.10.13 ,めぐみちゃんへ

⑧

Date: Fri, 13 Oct 1995 17:54:22 +0900
From: [redacted] 弓恵 <9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp>
To: 9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp
Cc: mariko
Subject: めぐみちゃんへ
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-2022-jp
X-Mailer: AL-Mail 0.94Beta

From: Yumie
To: Megumi
w/comments + Questions

Hello! Megumi.

Thank you for your letter.

Megumi's story was very interesting to me.

I am going to tell you a story about a my hobby.

My hobby is watching sports.

Soccer is the best of all sports. I like Soccer very much.

Because the soccer game threw me into a state of excite.

Let me ask some question.

1. Does she like sweet?

2. What are you doing every sunday?

3. What is you called by your friends?

See you again! Good-bye.

--

[redacted] 弓恵, 5:37 PM 95.10.13 ,Re: ゆみえちゃんへ

⑦

Date: Fri, 13 Oct 1995 17:37:22 +0900
From: [redacted] 弓恵 <9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp>
To: 9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp
Cc: mariko
Subject: Re: ゆみえちゃんへ
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-2022-jp
X-Mailer: AL-Mail 0.94Beta

From: Yumie
To: Megumi
Answers to Megumi's Questions

[redacted] 恵美 <9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp> さんより：
>Hello.
>Thank you for your letter.
>I have a dog and three cats in my house of Nagano.
>My dog name is Kanta. We call him "Kan".
>My cat name is "Mi","Tora"and "Siro".
>I like dog very much.
>But I don't like cat.
>My brother and my mother like cat very much.
>My father likes dog. My father takes dog for a field every day.
>My cats is a grandmother, a mother and a child.
>That is to say, my cats is a family.
>
>I think your way is wrong.
>I speak about it this time.
>

> ***Question***

>1. Do you have a doriver's license.

>Yes, I have. I enjoyed driving.

>2. How long does it take to go to a junior college ?
> I is ten minutes.

>3. How do you spend this summer vacation?>
I spend it in the country.

> At last, see you again.
>

[redacted] 弓恵, 2:27 PM 95.10.21 ,自己紹介 めぐみちゃんへ

⑨

Date: Sat, 21 Oct 1995 14:27:48 +0900
From: [redacted] 弓恵 <9521024@st.kasei.ac.jp>
To: 9521018@st.kasei.ac.jp
Cc: mariko
Subject: 自己紹介 めぐみちゃんへ
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=iso-2022-jp
X-Mailer: AL-Mail 0.94Beta

Yumie's Revised Self-Introduction

Hello! megumi.

Thank you for your letter.

18 SENTENCES + opening closing

My name is Yumie [redacted]. I am nineteen years old.

I was born in Tsukuba city, Ibaraki Prefecture on May 19th.

I live in Tsukuba city.

I am majoring in information processing.

I am going to tell you a story about a my family.

There are father, mother and three children in my family.

My father is 52 years old. He is very interesting. He is tall.

My mother is 49 years old. She is activity.

My brotheris 28 years old. His hobby playing baseball.

My sister is 18 years old. She is high school student.

She is very hard to study.

I have a dog.Name is Adonis. I call him "ado".

My family is very happy.

Thank you Megumi. See you again. Good-bye.

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Appendix B

First year students' comments

Q. 1: What was difficult about self-introduction?

- To write in appropriate English to convey what I wanted to say, therefore, I
  - (1) Simplified or found other way to say it,
  - (2) Wrote something else, or
  - (3) Was not sure if my partner understood me.
- To remember basic English grammar
- To think and write in English
- To decide how far or how much to write about myself
- To find out what to write about
- To type in English
- To write comments for my partner
- To understand my partner's writing
- To find time to write an e-mail message

Q. 2: What was good about writing about yourself?

- I could learn English by writing about myself.
- I could think about myself through this activity.
- To get to know more about each other
- We became better friends because of this activity.
- I enjoyed the differences between writing and talking.
- I could write in English which my partner could understand.
- To exchange messages by asking questions and answering

Q. 3: What was difficult about using e-mail?

- To master various technical functions
- To understand error messages
- To change small case letters to upper-case letters
- To switch from two-byte Japanese characters to one-byte English alphabets
- To find time to use the computer room equipped with e-mail system.

Q. 4: What was good about using e-mail?

- Sending and reading messages at our convenience
- To be able to understand my partner better
- To talk to someone by writing
- To be able to take time to write
- To be able to send or reply faster than mail
- To use e-mail instead of phone or letters
- To be able to use convenient functions such as CC, reply, etc.
- Not to use any paper
- To be able to understand the computer better
- Rewriting was easier
- To be able to save the file for later use
- To be able to reply by quoting what the partner wrote
- Enjoyed reading my partner's message

Q. 5: Any other comments?

- I need more practical knowledge of English.
- I enjoyed the activity toward the end.
- To write even a short message was difficult for me.
- We should use e-mail more often.
- We need a spell-checker in the e-mail system.
- Now, I can use e-mail with my friends.